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MISSIONS

IN THE

LIFE OF CHRIST:

AN ADDRESS.

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CINCINNATI:
FOREIGN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

MISSIONS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.*

TEXT :—*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house.—Heb. iii: 1, 2.*

The word "apostle" means precisely the same as the word "missionary." Apostle is from the Greek; missionary is from the Latin; but both mean one who is "sent." Our Lord tells us that he did not come of himself; the Father *sent* him. "For God *sent* not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." "As the living Father *sent* me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me." "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst *send*, *even* Jesus Christ." John says, "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath *sent* his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent* his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Livingstone said, "God had only one Son and he made of him a missionary and sent him into the world to seek and to save that which

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was lost!" The text calls upon us to consider this Apostle or Missionary even Jesus. I invite your attention to this subject—*Missions in the Life of Christ.*

I. LET US CONSIDER THE EFFORTS HE PUT FORTH TO SAVE THE WORLD. Peter speaks of him as anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, and adds that he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil. A large part of the gospels is taken up with the record of his evangelistic tours. He had no settled home ; he needed none. In order to accomplish the purpose for which he was sent, he must visit the towns and villages of Palestine. A few followed him from place to place, but in the nature of the case most could not leave their homes. If reached at all, the gospel must be carried to them. The constant aim and endeavor of our Lord was to evangelize the whole people before his earthly career closed forever. His missionary zeal and activity were boundless. His baptism took place at Bethany beyond Jordan. While there he called Andrew and Simon, Philip and Nathaniel. After a little he returned to Galilee. We read of his being at the marriage at Cana where he performed his first miracle, and manifested his glory. At the close of the feast he went to Capernaum for a few days. We find him next in Jerusalem at the Passover. It was at this time that he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money, and made a scourge of cords and drove them all out, and said : "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." He spent some time in and near Jeru-

salem. We are told that many believed on him beholding the signs which he did. Among these was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. But the ruling class held aloof. When he knew that the Pharisees heard that he made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judea and went back to Galilee. On the way, as he passed through Samaria he came to Jacob's well where he had that memorable talk with the woman of Sychar. In answer to the request of the people of the village he remained with them two days. The historian says that many believed on him because of the word of the woman, and many more believed on him because of his own word. These said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

On reaching Galilee he preached in their synagogues that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He visited Cana a second time, and healed the dying son of a nobleman. Thereupon he went to Nazareth where he had been brought up. Here it was that he read and expounded the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The people were pleased at first, but before he was done they were filled with wrath, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. Rejected in

Nazareth, he went to Capernaum, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." While he was preaching there he healed a man who had an unclean demon. The narrative says that there went forth a rumor of him into every place of the region round about. It was about this time that he began to visit and to preach in every part of Galilee. We read, "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."—Matt. iv: 23. Matthew adds that there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond Jordan. His fame reached Syria, and they brought to him their sick, their demoniacs, the epileptic, and the palsied, and he healed them. Speaking of this time Mark tells us that Simon and others said to him, "All men are seeking thee." He said, "Let us go elsewhere, into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." He could not stop to be admired; his work was to reach the whole people. He could not do that by staying in one place. About this time Luke tells us that the multitudes sought after him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from thence. But he said, "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for therefore was I sent." Popularity was not his aim. His mission was to reach the people with the message respect-

ing the kingdom. To do that he must brush aside all opposition and go to them.

Having finished his first circuit of Galilee, he attended a feast in Jerusalem. Here he healed the man who had been in Bethesda for thirty-eight years. On account of the hostility of the rulers he is soon on his way back to Galilee. Because he healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day it was proposed to put him to death. Learning of this he withdrew from the public gaze and charged his friends not to make him known. The Prophet had said of him, "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets." Next he appears in Capernaum where he healed the centurion's servant. After this he is in the city of Nain; here he raises to life the widow's son. At this point he made a second missionary tour through Galilee. Luke says, "And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God."—Luke viii: 1. While on this tour his mother and brothers came to have an interview with him. While on this tour great multitudes followed him and he spoke many parables to them. Because of the crowds and the excitement he crossed the Sea of Galilee and entered the country of the Gadarenes. Here he healed the fierce demoniac. Because of the loss of their swine, the people begged him to depart out of their coasts. He left at their request and went back to Capernaum. At this place Matthew made him a feast. Here he raised the daughter of Jairus. After this two blind men besought him to have

mercy on them. He touched and opened their eyes. After this he returned to Nazareth and was rejected a second time. His townsmen were scandalized because they could not account for his mighty deeds. He next made a third circuit of Galilee. The historian says: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." —Matt. ix: 35. When he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd. Then said he to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

We next find him crossing the Sea of Galilee. Great numbers followed him. They were in such eager haste that they forgot to take any food with them. Here it was that he took the five loaves and the two fishes and fed five thousand. The people wanted to take him by force and make him a king. Seeing this he withdrew into a mountain, and that night he crossed the sea again and came to Capernaum. For a season he walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Judea, for the Jews sought to kill him. After this he went far north into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, where he healed the daughter of the Syro-Phenician woman. Then he returned near to the Sea of Galilee, and the people brought to him the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and he healed them. They were astonished, and said, "He hath done all things

well; he maketh even the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." Here in Decapolis he fed four thousand. Here it was that the Pharisees came to him, asking him a sign from heaven. He refused to give them a sign, and recrossed the lake. We next hear of him in Bethsaida, where he healed a blind man. Afterwards he is with his disciples at Cesarea Philippi, where Peter confessed his divinity. The Transfiguration on Mount Hermon followed. Then he returned to Galilee and Capernaum. Soon after he started to Jerusalem. The Samaritan villages refused to receive him because they saw that he was bound for Jerusalem. On his arrival he taught in the temple and the people came to him. Then he left Judea for Perea; there he healed the woman who had been afflicted for eighteen years. There he heard of the death of Lazarus, and there he spoke three parables, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Prodigal Son.

In due time he went back to Bethany and restored Lazarus. Afterwards he retired to Ephraim, then we find him in the border of Samaria, then in Perea, then in Jericho, and then in Jerusalem. He is constantly in motion. He made eight circuits of Galilee. He is repeatedly in Judea, Samaria, and Perea. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and he earnestly sought to reach every one.

Because the field was large, he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. As they went forth he charged them,

saying, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely ye received, freely give." They were to take no gold, nor silver, nor brass; no wallet, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff. If they were persecuted in this city, they were to flee into the next. The time was short. They would not be able to go through the cities of Israel till the Son of man would come. Later in his ministry he sent out seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. Their instructions were similar to those given to the twelve. The Master said to them, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me." The people must hear the gospel. In order to this these men are sent out into every city and place to say to them "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

II. LET US CONSIDER HIS TEACHING RESPECTING THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD. We hear him say, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd." Our Lord was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The twelve were told to confine their labors to the chosen people. But all along there are intimations that the gospel is for all races and for all classes and conditions of men.

The wise men who came from the East were guided by a star to the place where the young child was. They came to worship him. They opened their treasures and offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. It is plain that the Divine favor rested upon them. Afterwards some Greeks came to Jerusalem saying, "We would see Jesus." The Lord heard of their request and was not displeased. Speaking of the faith of the centurion he said, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." He excited the wrath of his townsmen by telling them that though there were many widows in Israel during the famine, Elijah was sent to none of them, but to a Gentile woman in Sarepta, in Sidon; and that though there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha none of them was cleansed, save Naaman the Syrian. Our Lord was telling them all through his ministry that the gospel was for all mankind. He had sheep other than those of the house of Israel, and these he must bring. Again he said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations" Our Lord taught that the whole world should be evangelized.

The gospel is not for any one race, or for any one section of the globe, but for all races and for all sections. Speaking of his death he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." After his death and resurrection he said, "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." The men whom he called and trained he named apostles or missionaries. He said to them, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He knew what was in man, he knew how to reach his heart and conscience. He said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." There are some now who say, "Send the Bible to people." That was not Christ's method. It is by the living voice of living men that souls are won to the belief and the obedience of the truth. Our Lord did not remain in one place and allow the people to come to him. He did not send them a written or oral message. He sought out the people and spoke to them. He would have his disciples do the same. Every man who succeeds in reaching the people does as Christ did He goes after them and finds them. The Salvation Army reaches and rescues people whom the churches can not save. The soldiers go into the slums, into the streets and lanes, where the people are, and lay hold of them and lift them up. If they would build costly houses of worship in some aristocratic

part of the city, and invite the people to come and hear, they would be disappointed. The bells may ring and announce the services; papers may say that all seats are free; but the unsaved are not won by such agencies. Our Lord knew how to reach the masses. He said, "Go." Sending a new Testament by mail or by express does not obey this command. Just before his ascension he said to the Eleven, "But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." His last thought on earth had to do with the evangelization of the whole world. They were thinking about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel; he was thinking about the redemption of a lost world. After his coronation he appeared to Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus in the interest of this work. He said: "I have appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." The glorified Redeemer was so deeply interested in the evangelization of the world that he appeared to Saul to qualify him to take part in this work. On Patmos he appeared to John and showed him a vision of redeemed humanity. He heard every created

thing that is in the heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things that are in them, saying, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever."

Our Lord was a missionary, and as such he was faithful to him that appointed him. The Christian religion is essentially missionary. It is not tribal and local, but world-embracing. Those who claim to be followers of Christ must be missionary. It is well to contend earnestly for sound doctrine and for the ordinances as delivered to us; but let us not think that we can hold fast to Christ and stand aloof from the great cause of missions. Milman calls attention to that famous book, "The Imitation of Christ," and states that never was a misnomer so glaring, if rightly considered, as its title. "It is absolutely and entirely selfish in its aims as in its acts. Its sole single and exclusive object is the purification, the elevation of the individual soul, of the man absolutely isolated from his kind; with no hopes or fears, with no sympathies of our common nature; he has absolntely withdrawn and secluded himself not only from the cares, the sins, the trials, but from the duties, the connections, the moral and religious fate of the world." "That which distinguishes Christ, that which distinguishes Christ's apostles, that which distinguishes Christ's religion—the love of man—is entirely and absolutely left out." Had this been the whole of Christianity, our Lord and his apostles would never have done the great works the New Testament records. They

might have dwelt in rapture upon the emotions of their own souls, but they would not have turned the world upside down and reconstructed society. "The Imitation of Christ" begins in self and terminates in self. Its axiom is, "Let the world perish, so the single soul can escape on its solitary plank from the general wreck." The saying concerning Christ, "He went about doing good," is not in the monastic gospel of this pious zealot. Of feeding the hungry, of clothing the naked, of visiting the prisoner, there is profound, total silence. The view of Thomas a Kempis is the view of some now. But it is a mistaken view. The Christ Spirit does not drive us into the wilderness and away from humanity. It does not lead us to think solely of making our own calling and election sure. Whittier says, "He findeth not who seeks his own, that soul is lost that's saved alone." It is in helping to seek and save the lost that we save ourselves. If we would have the Spirit of Christ in us we must be missionary. We must do what we can to carry the gospel to those who sit in darkness, and to guide their feet into the way of peace.

"Pilgrim's Progress" is one of the most popular religious works ever written. It is one of the few books Dr. Johnson wished were longer. Bunyan had the same conception of the Christian life that the author of "The Imitation" had. His hero had one end in view, and that was to save his own soul. He did not take his wife and children with him to the celestial city. He put forth no effort and manifested no desire for the salvation of another soul. Bunyan's hero is named "Christian."

It is implied that he is a typical Christian. He was a typical Christian of the seventeenth century. In this respect he is unlike Christ. The New Testament portrays Him as a Saviour. His dominant desire was to seek and save the lost. His enemies said of him, and they said the truth, "He saved others, himself he could not save." Bunyan's conception is as wide of the mark as is the conception of Thomas a Kempis.

To this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. On his brow are many crowns; on his vesture and on his thigh are the words, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Do we recognize him as Lord of all? Are his example and commands authoritive? If we have any doubt on this score, let us go back to our baptism. In that ordinance we vowed eternal fealty to him. We pledged him that we would love him, and trust him, and serve him for evermore. He says to us, "If you love me keep my commandments." "You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you." His last command, his supreme command, was that we should evangelize the world. We must do this or be recreant. We repeat the great words: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." If the love of Christ does constrain us we can not live to please ourselves. Our great question

will not be: What shall I eat? or what shall I drink? or wherewithal shall I be clothed? It will rather be, How can I send the truth to those who have never heard it? If his love constrains us, our deepest desire will be that his kingdom may come, and that his will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. If his love constrains us, we shall be willing to fill up that which is behind of his sufferings, and make it our chief concern to bear the gospel into all the world and to every creature. If, on the contrary, the love of ease and pleasure constrains us, and we disregard his command, we shall have to answer the question, "Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things which I say?"

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